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Spying on Russia, With China's Help

Now coming to light is a bizarre story of American-Chinese cooperation against Moscow: The two countries for months have been using two electronic intelligence-gathering stations to monitor Soviet missile tests.

The disclosure came in mid-June while Secretary of State Alexander Haig was in Peking negotiating new arrangements for Chinese-American action against Russian expansionism.

The two spy stations are in a mountainous region of northwest China bordering an area where the Russians maintain two missile-test sites. They were built secretly with equipment supplied by the U.S. and are manned by Chinese technicians.

Both countries share information col-

lected by the highly sophisticated monitoring complex. This includes data on the development of new Soviet missiles as well as the accuracy of weapons tested and the number of warheads they carry. The stations also eavesdrop on Soviet military communications across the frontier.

It was an offer by China's political boss, Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping, on April 20, 1979, that led to the joint espionage enterprise against the Soviets. Deng told visiting American senators that China was willing to help the U.S. fill the vacuum created when ouster of the Shah forced the shutdown of two intelligence-gathering stations in northern Iran earlier in 1979. Secret negotiations by the Carter administration led to construction of the China stations.

The project ranks among the most sensitive ever handled by the Central Intelligence Agency. U.S. officials fear that exposure of the stations could embarrass Chinese leaders and jeopardize even more collaboration between Peking and Washington. □

